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RIGHT HONOURABLE

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IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THURSDAY, THE 14th FEBRUARY, 1799,

ON THE QUESTION OF THE BRINGING UP THE

RESOLUTIONS

RESPECTING THE

IRISH UNION,

PASSED IN THE COMMITTEE.

LONDON:

1799.

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RIGHT HON. THE EARL TEMPLE.

MR. SPEAKER,

IT might perhaps have better become me to have listened to the arguments adduced by others on this subject, than to have intruded my own; at the same time I cannot help feeling that, on a question of this importance, which so deeply affects the existence of one country, and the welfare of another, which involves topics so various, and interests hitherto so discordant, I should not do my duty as a Member of Parliament, if I gave a silent vote: and however an Honourable Gentleman might on a former night have congratulated the House and the Country, that whatever might have been the pledge which the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer might

have given, of his determination to persevere in the measure of an Union between England and Ireland, the Country and the House had not seconded him in the pledge; that Honourable Gentleman may now withdraw his congratulations, as the House has now received the measure, and it is no longer the measure of the Minister, but of the Country.

I think, Sir, that it particularly becomes the duty of every man who has the honour of Parliament at heart, to rescue it from the charge which the Honourable Gentleman, who opposed the measure, has sent into the world,—" that the House is inclined to support a measure, which they wish the Country to believe his Majesty's Ministers mean to carry into effect by force, by corruption, and by bribery."

It should seem, from the language used in Ireland, and *re-echoed* here, as if, from the first moment of their coming into office, his Majesty's Ministers had only been watching for an opportunity to lay Ireland bound at the feet of England; and that having found

it, they were determined to take advantage of it. That such language should be held by persons whose object has so long been the separation between the two Countries, does not surprise me, but that such an idea should be broached in an English House of Parliament, and by gentlemen of their acknowledged abilities, whose knowledge of the history of their country should have flashed conviction to their minds, even through the thick mist of prejudice and of party, gives me the greatest concern.

From the first moment of Irish disaffection, and subsequent rebellion, it is not necessary for me to state to this House what has been unfortunately too self-evident, that the sole object of the promoters of those discontents, has been a *separation between England and Ireland.*

In that country as well as in this, Parliamentary Reform has been made the mask to cover the distorted features of anarchy and rebellion. In Ireland, the prejudices of religious education have been called in to assist the cause of infidelity; every artifice

has been made use of to inflame the ardent mind of the enthusiast; the mild lessons of religion have been perverted to the cause of treason; and the Catholic has been taught to look for emancipation only in the downfall of the government which protected him. The tenant was taught that murder was no crime, when practised against his landlord; the poor man was told, that in the cause of liberty, the knife might with propriety be plunged into the bosom of the rich man, who fed him; the pastor was sacrificed at the altar of his God, by the men to whom he preached the lessons which that God inculcated,—lessons of mercy and of charity! Every bond of affection, every tie of connection, of friendship, and of blood, were broken through, and all to arrive at the one great end of separation! the declarations, both in public and in private, of the chiefs of that rebellion, avowed that to be their real object, their real aim; and the opposition they now make to a measure calculated to draw the connection between the two countries closer, shews what their views

were, and what their disappointment is at those views being defeated. Is it then, Sir, to be wondered at, that England does not sit quiet, and view with unconcern this daring attempt to wrest from her the brightest jewel of her crown? Is it to be wondered at that England does not hesitate to take the only measure which now remains in her power, which, by confirming the existence of Ireland, confirms the security of the Empire? and is it to be wondered at, that the men who have not scrupled to deluge their country in blood, in order to deliver up that country, bound, and weakened by its wounds, to an inveterate enemy, should oppose a measure calculated to save that country, to "blast their darling hopes, their future views!" In the words of the Arch-fiend in Milton, they exclaim,—"If then," say they,

"If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to prevent that end,
And out of good still to find the means of evil;

Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.

PAR. LOST, Book I.

Well aware, Sir, am I, that there are many who oppose this measure, both in England and Ireland, on far different principles; well aware, Sir, am I, that there are some gentlemen who oppose it in Ireland, of known honour and integrity; men who have heretofore shewn their attachment to their Country, their loyalty to their King; that such men should so far forget their duty to their country, as to allow themselves to be made the dupes of popular prejudice, and of factious clamour, as to induce them to sacrifice the dearest objects of that Country, to a temporary popularity, or to a momentary impulse of disappointment, gives me the greatest concern. The abilities of those men, in common with the rest of the world, I must admire; the perversion of them, I must as sincerely regret.

But, Sir, it should seem, from the lan-

guage of the Honourable Gentlemen who oppose the measure here, as if the *principle* of the measure was not so bad, but the *moment* was an improper one in which it was brought forward. Indeed, one Honourable Gentleman went so far as to state, that he believed there was scarcely a man in this House, who did not in his heart regret that the measure was brought forward at this moment. Now, Sir, for my own part, I can only give the opinion of an individual; but I do not scruple to assert, that if the principle of the measure be tolerable, this is the only moment when it ought to be brought forward. What, Sir, I would ask, is the object of an Union? the object of it is, to rescue the Country from the dangers which surround it, to ensure to it the continuance of that assistance by which it has already been preserved. Why, Sir, put off the cure, till the disease has gained a head to baffle its effects? why defer the remedy, till the efficacy of the medicine is counteracted by the violence of the distemper?

But, say the Honourable Gentlemen, how infamous is it to bring forward a measure to irritate the minds of the Irish, and to inflame their passions! That their passions *are* inflamed, that their minds *are* irritated, I allow; but that they are so by the measure of an Union, *I deny*. Their passions are irritated by the factious endeavours of those men, who only look to this or any other measure, as a stock on which to engraft confusion and rebellion! their minds are inflamed by the strange dereliction of principle, by the sudden, by the unaccountable change in the opinion of those men to whom Ireland had before been accustomed to look, as the strongest advocates for Irish connection with England, and the loudest assertors of the advantages which Ireland had received from that connection; by the coalition of those men with a party which, Ireland had been told *by them*, was hostile to her interests, by the unnatural connection of principles hitherto the most discordant, of politics the most jarring; by a

coalition, which has drawn into one point all the faction, all the prejudices, all the violence, and all the intemperance, which had before been scattered over the face of that unhappy country. On the heads of those men, and *on their heads alone*, who have deserted their Country, in order to fetter its government, and cramp its counsels, fall the irritation of the passions, and the inflammation of the mind of Ireland; and on their heads fall the consequences, whatever they may be, the consequences which, unless the measure of an Union takes place, will, I fear, result from a coalition, and a conjunction, so full of mischief, and so pregnant with evils!

But, say the Honourable Gentlemen, how mean it is to take advantage of the weakness of Ireland, and to force this measure upon the Country! How much *more* mean, how much *more* despicable would it have been in England, to have deserted Ireland in the moment of her weakness; to have neglected her in the time of her peril; to have

said to her, " By your own folly, by your " own imbecillity, you have drawn these " evils upon yourself. By your own exer- " tions extricate yourself. We will not " move a step to save you. *We* have a Con- " stitution; *we* have a Government, by " the blessings, by the advantages of which, " *we* have escaped those horrors to which " you have fallen a victim; but those bless- " ings, and those advantages we will en- " joy alone; do not hope to partake them " with us." Perhaps this would have been the language which the Honourable Gentlemen had wished England to have held to Ireland. Perhaps they would have wished his Majesty's Ministers had so far forgot the duty which they owe to Ireland, as to have withheld the assistance, which the purse, and the arms of England have given her, in order to have held her up, as a set off to England, and a terrible example to Europe, of the effects of disunion, of rebellion, and of discontent.

But, says one Honourable Gentleman, his

Majesty's Ministers mean to carry on an Union by corruption, by turning out the old servants of the Crown, and by substituting others more subservient to their views; by holding out "a lure to the "Catholics; the hopes of a dockyard to "Cork; and of a maritime force to Ire-"land." Such is the charge brought forward by the Honourable Gentleman, and so far we understand him. But then he exclaims.—"No wonder Ireland startles at "corruption, so offensive; at bribery, so "open; *England ought to have granted all "these benefits before!*" Thus, then, the enigma is explained, and the murder is out:—it is not the *bribery* which excites the patriotic indignation of the Honourable Gentleman, but the *clumsiness* of it, how awkward, says he, thus to offer as *a bribe*, what could have been snugly and quietly bestowed as *a gratuity!* the consequences would have been the same; and whenever the Union could have been brought forward, this generosity of Ministers would have had all the *effect*,

without carrying with it the *obloquy*, of *a bribe!* Such is the singular mode of reasoning of the Honourable Gentleman; not aware, perhaps, that the best reason why Ireland was not bribed in the manner, and at the time he wished, was, that his Majesty's Ministers, perhaps, had not made it up to their minds: the people of England had not made it up to their minds either, to have granted emancipation to the Catholics, at the moment when that emancipation might have been used as an instrument of separation, to have given Cork a dockyard, and Ireland a maritime force, which would only have been conferring a maritime force, and a dockyard upon an enemy!

But, at length, comes the grand objection to an Union, both in Ireland, and in the mouths of the Honourable Gentlemen in this house. Irish Union will take away Irish Independance! Now, Sir, I will suppose a perfect stranger to Ireland, and to its relative situation with England, landed in Dublin, stunned with the noise, and con-

founded with the clamour and disorder of the inhabitants, he would naturally conclude, that the monarchy of Ireland was independent; that her trade, her resources, and her credit, were independent; and that England was striving to dethrone the monarch of Ireland, to attach the crown to her own, and to seize on the commerce, the advantages, the wealth, and the resources, which are so much superior to any that England can boast of; and, consequently, so much the object of English ambition. How astonished would he be, when he discovered that the *crown* of Ireland was not in dispute; that her trade, her credit, and her wealth, were not in dispute; but he would be told by the anti-unionist, that Ireland was struggling for her *Independance*, the noblest birthright of heaven. What then, (would he say) England then means to withdraw the protection she has granted to your commerce, the aid she has extended to your credit, and the assistance she has given to your arms? No, would be the answer of

the anti-unionist, that is not the case: the fleets of England still protect the coasts of Ireland; the troops of England still fight the battles of Ireland; the Parliament of England still protects the trade of Ireland; but we are contending for our *Independent Legislature*. What then, England proposes to take away your Independent Legislature, to abolish your courts of justice, and to subject the property of Ireland to the decisions of British lawyers? No, must be the reply; we do not hear that our courts of justice are to be abolished, or that the property of Ireland is to be thrown at the mercy of English lawyers; but we are contending for our *Parliament*. What then, England means to *take away* your Parliament, to destroy every trace of the institution, and to subject Ireland to the beck of an English Minister? I really am no longer surprised at your opposition to such a measure.—That is not the case, either, must be the answer.—The Parliament of Ireland is not to be abolished; the place of its sittings

only is to be changed; it will only be joined with the already united Parliament of England, and of Scotland; and we shall be no more at the beck of an English Minister, than we are now. What then, Ireland is to pay the *debt of England?* I really do not wonder at your unwillingness to pay a debt not of your own contracting! No; not quite that: we shall not be obliged to pay *one sixpence* more of debt than we are now. What then, you are to pay *English taxes?* No; (how stupid are you not to discover our grievances) we shall not be obliged to pay one shilling of *English taxes.* The last question then, which the stranger would probably ask, would be, " Please then to tell me what your *Independance* is, which you are so anxious to preserve, and which you are so fearful of losing? As every principle of Independance that I have hitherto formed or entertained, falls, I find, very short of what I hear called *Irish Independance.* Now, Sir, really to that question, I can give no answer. I can carry on

the dialogue no further; as on that subject, I am just as much at a loss, and require just as much information, as the stranger can possibly feel the want of.

I have now, Sir, carried on what I conceive would pretty nearly be the dialogue between the anti-unionist, and a stranger, perfectly ignorant of the state of Ireland. —But the Honourable Gentlemen, who, I conceive, do not fancy themselves perfectly strangers to the state of Ireland, boldly assert, that an Union will infringe the compact of 1782; the compact which the Honourable Gentlemen think proper to call "*final.*" Now, Sir, in the first place, I will ask the Honourable Gentlemen, who ever called that compact "final?" Did the Parliament of England call it "final?" No. Did the Parliament of Ireland call it "final?" No. Did ever any one call that compact "final," till the Honourable Gentlemen chose to call it so, because it best suited their purposes that it should be thought so? No.— How, putting Ireland upon the same foot-

ing as ourselves, placing her on ground, on which Ireland could *treat* on a perfect equality with England (which after all, let Gentlemen say what they please, was all that we did by the compact of 1782); how, treating with her now upon those grounds, establishing her Independance by the very act of treating with her, can be called infringing the Independance of Ireland, I leave to the ingenuity of Sir John Parnell and Mr. Forster, to discover.—If we did not acknowledge Ireland to be Independant, where would be the necessity of this discussion? If we did not consider her Parliament as Independant, why should we be guided by its decision; why should we wait for its consent, when, in that case, all that would be necessary for us to do, would be to pass the measure here, and to carry it into effect in Ireland?

But the fact is, Sir, that an Union *would* take away part of Irish *Independance*. It would take away that part of her *Independance*, which could not ensure to itself

the only blessings which can render Independance valuable; it will take away that Independance which has not been able to secure its country from a persecution worse than the most galling slavery; from a *dependance* of the most miserable, of the most disgraceful sort—a dependance on the mercy of an inveterate enemy.

From the first moment, Sir, when Fitzgerald and Fitzstephens first planted the English colony in Ireland; from the period when Ireland was awakened by England from the slumber of savage barbarity, and rude nature, in which she was plunged, a constant scene of struggle presented itself between the two nations, till, in the year 1782, England gave up the contest, and allowed Ireland to try the *experiment* she longed for—the *experiment* of Independance. It was the hope, Sir, as it was the expectation of every rational man, when the Independance of the country, as far as was consistent with its connection with England, was conceded, that she would have remained

contented, and enjoyed with tranquil pride, the privileges she had gained. Was that the case? Has Ireland shewn a wish to be contented, and to remain an appendage, a *privileged* appendage to England? No. From the year 82, we have seen concession conceded on concession by England, and demand repeated on demand by Ireland.

At the period, Sir, to which Ireland can only look back with horror, as to a precipice, by miracle escaped, at the protentous moment when the question of the Regency was discussed, the discontented spirits in Ireland shewed the cloven foot, and gained the first step towards the attainment of their grand object, *Separation*.—The events of that momentous crisis, when the eye of the British empire was dimmed with tears, and its brow clouded with sorrow and with consternation, are so recent in the memories of every one who hears me, that I shall draw a veil over them, which should never be raised, save when it may be necessary to mark the attempt which Ireland then made to take

advantage of the storm which clouded the horizon.

From that moment, Sir, we have seen the progressive, the interrupted, but the persevering attempts at separation, until the fire which hitherto had smouldered in silence and in obscurity, burst out into a blaze, which involved the dearest interests of Britain in the conflagration, and threatened consequences the most fatal and the most horrid.

The experiment of Irish Independance had failed; Ireland had, herself, cut the ground from under her feet, on which England had placed her; Ireland had herself rejected the footing of equal connection which England had conceded to her, by negotiating with the common enemy both of England and of Ireland. Irish Independance had not been able to preserve itself from being *sold* to that enemy. Irish Independance had not been able to protect its Country from a rebellion in its bosom, which, under the stale pretext of Parlia-

mentary Reform, aimed at the diabolical object of an Irish Republic. England, Sir, had given to Ireland every thing which her Constitution allowed her to bestow. She could get no more from her ; she turned to another country ; and took from France, what, thank God, she could not receive from England; a pattern of treason, of anarchy, and of rebellion.

By the loyalty, by the laudable and persevering spirit of those men who still preferred English connection to French fraternity, that rebellion was resisted, but not quelled. Every prejudice which could be worked upon was excited to assist the progress, to insure the success of the Revolution ; the hitherto most discordant parties, the Catholics and the Presbyterians, were called in to aid the bloody work, because, they were told, that their exertions would attain the great objects of Catholic emancipation, and of the Parliamentary Reform. So completely had the authors of these horrors masked their real objects, their real

views, that it is a fact perfectly in the recollection of those who hear me, how completely certain persons, on this side of the water, were the dupes of their artifices; and how at one time we were told, "would "but the Parliament of England interfere in the Government of Ireland" (the Government, whose Independance, we are now told, the Parliament of England guaranteed); "would but England interfere, "the people would be happy, Ireland "would be contented!" until, at length, the veil was *torn* away, and the Chiefs of the Rebellion themselves avowing what their views were, confessed, that neither Catholic Emancipation, nor Parliamentary Reform, were the real objects of their wishes or of their desires; but that their sole and only pursuit was, Separation from England, *and Union with France.* Union they were determined to have; but unfortunately they preferred a French to an English one!

Such is the situation of the Country; a decided revolutionary party in its bosom; a

diabolical spirit which has been bent, but not broken; the existence of the Country secured only for a moment by the assistance which England so generously bestowed; its Capital garrisoned by British troops, which that Country welcomed into its bosom with shouts of gratitude and of joy. Ask grateful Ireland a few months ago, to whom she ascribed her safety and her protection; she would have answered, "to England, who sent her troops over and "saved us:" and yet these very troops are now exposed to the insults of a factious populace, to every species of opprobrium which the savage fury of Irish Republicans can inflict; branded with the names of English Mameloucs, sent by an English Minister, to force an Union down the throat of Ireland, at the point of the bayonet; and all because they have shewn themselves the friends of good order and of good government, steady to their duty, their Country, and their King! and yet this is the Country which is to stand alone, disdainful of

assistance, and proud in her own Independance!

But no! says grateful Ireland,—" we do " not wish to be separated from England; " we will enjoy English connection, but we " will not receive English Union." How kind and how condescending on the part of Ireland! " When we are in danger (say " they) we will call upon you to send your " troops over to fight the battles we cannot " fight for ourselves! we will call upon you " to allow yourselves to be stripped of your " national, of your constitutional force; we " will enjoy every blessing which your con- " nection can give us; we will allow our " trade to be protected by a British Parlia- " ment, to be encouraged by British capi- " tal; but the moment you ask us to repay " in some measure these benefits, by par- " taking of the blessings of your Govern- " ment, and the protection of your laws; the " moment you ask us to give our mite to- " wards the maintenance of the Empire, by " taking the means in our power to prevent

" France from making Ireland a stepping " stone into England, from being a thorn " in her side, and a serpent in her path, we " beg to be excused; you have saved us " once; when we want you again, we will " call upon you!" Such is the language of Irish gratitude; and now, say those men who before wanted England to interfere with the *independant* government of Ireland, do not bring forward your Union, do not attempt to carry it through, because—because what? because, forsooth, you will interfere in Irish Independance!

Good God, Sir, if Ireland could support her Independance, without leaning the whole weight of it upon the shoulder of England; if Ireland could support Irish Independance, with English connection, I should be the first to say,—do not touch that Independance; I should be the first to resist any attempt to take it away; but I appeal to every man who hears me, to every *unprejudiced* man in Ireland, and let me be told, whether Ireland is, or is not

in the same relative situation with England, in which she was when England conceded her independance. Sir, I do not wish to upbraid Ireland with benefits; but when I am told that the happiness and the credit of Ireland are to be the price of an Union, I am obliged, on my side, to recur to arguments to prove, that whatever may be the happiness, whatever may be the credit of Ireland, that happiness and that credit can only be maintained by the protection of England.

Sir, I will beg the House to look to the situation of Ireland in the reign of Edward the Sixth, and mark how strongly the then existing circumstances of Ireland coincided with the present. Owing to the attempts which were then made to introduce the Protestant religion into a Catholic country, Ireland became disaffected and discontented. Philip of Spain saw the opportunity which was given him, to take advantage of the irritation of the public mind; partial invasions had been attempted on the coast

of Ireland, which from its situation was particularly open to his attack. The impending danger gave serious alarm to the vigilant mind of Elizabeth. What were the precautions which she took to counteract it? she sent troops over which, in the beginning of the succeeding reign gained possession of the country. The Brehon law was then abolished, the English law was substituted over Ireland. Now, Sir, however strong (and strong it certainly is) the comparison may be between the situation of Ireland *then*, and its situation *now*, the comparison holds good no further; and the conduct of England under similar circumstances, is most widely different. Where Elizabeth held out the sword, England now extends the olive branch;—where Elizabeth involved every party, and every prejudice, in one indiscriminate ruin, and right of conquest, England now says,—"forget all feuds, all parties, all prejudices, "and partake of what with confidence I can "recommend,—my own constitution, and "my own government!"

The next argument which I shall take notice of, used by the Honourable Gentlemen, is indeed a most singular one, and includes a contradiction most extraordinary. The Honourable Gentlemen state, as a very strong argument against the Union, that the Parliament of Ireland has no right to pass an act which, in its principle, is contrary to the Constitution of the Country. Now, Sir, it is most whimsical, that with the same breath with which they tell you this, they allow the competence (and they *recommend* the exercise of it) but they allow the competence of the Irish Parliament, to do what? why, to give complete *emancipation to the Catholics*. Now, Sir, I call upon the Honourable Gentlemen to mention any one measure so completely militating against every principle of the Irish Constitution, as it now stands, than the very measure they recommend,—nothing, say they, can save the country but Catholic emancipation; and yet the Parliament cannot receive the measure of an Union, because they can

do nothing against the Constitution of Ireland!

But, says Ireland, the moment you take away (what they are pleased to term) our Independance, you hurt our trade, you cripple our credit, and you diminish our resources. Now, Sir, the struggles of an independent mind to preserve that Independance, I can view with pleasure and with admiration; but really objections so futile, so weak, and so childish, deserve scarcely to be treated seriously.

How, Sir, can an English Union affect the trade of Ireland, free as it is, and supported to the degree it is, by British Capital? Will an Union *diminish* the encouragement to the employment of British Capital? No:—the additional security which will be given to the country, must give additional encouragement to the employment of British Capital. The value of land must increase in proportion to the protection which is given to the landholder. What encouragement has any man now to lay

out his money in land in Ireland? none.—It is a fact, known and acknowledged, that at the time when Great Britain conceded to Ireland the appeal to her courts, the value of land *fell* in Ireland; part of its security was taken away, its risk proportionably increased. The absentee will have some temptation to reside upon his estate, which he will have some temptation to improve. Ask him now his object and his wish; and he will tell you, it is to draw his money, and as much of it as he can, *out* of Ireland. When Government guarantees not only the property, but the protection of it to him, he will then have some temptation to throw back that money into the bosom of the country, in order to improve a property he will then have some chance of preserving. What, Sir, is the value of an Irish estate now? scarcely a year's purchase: the landholder, distrustful of the situation of the country, seeing it open to domestic treason, and to foreign invasion; unable of itself to repress the former, or to prevent the latter,

looks only to draw his annual rent from his estate, thinks himself happy if he can get it, and looks no further. This cannot be the case, if Ireland is united with England. The protection in the one country will be the same as the protection in the other, and the Irish landholder will have the additional advantage of having the faith of the British Parliament, and the power of the British people, pledged to secure that property to him.

With respect to the arts, their encouragement is, indeed, but poor in Ireland; their progress has been slow, their growth has been checked, the weight of poverty has oppressed them, the chill hand of prejudice has frozen their current; the elasticity which they have lost, an Union *must* restore, as it will be the interest of England to encourage the efforts of the manufacturer, the artizan, and the adventurer, in a country which will, then, form an integral part of itself.

But, Sir, it should seem, from the lan-

guage held in both countries, as if, in case of an Union, all the advantages would be on the side of England, all the disadvantages would fall to the share of Ireland. That, Sir, is a question worth inquiring into; and I would ask the violent Anti-unionist, what are the advantages which England is to gain, distinct from Ireland, in case of an Union? Is it protection?—Separate the two countries, and then let Ireland ask herself, which is most in want of protection. Is it property?—The complaint of Ireland already is, that too much of her property goes through the hands of absentees, and never benefits its native country;—why? because the absentee has an encouragement to lay out his money in England, which he cannot have in Ireland, in its present state. To give the resident, as well as the absentee, an opportunity of laying out its money with security, as well as with profit, must be the consequence, as it certainly will be the object, of an Union.

Let, Sir, the Anti-unionist look to Scot-

land; and let him ask whether her trade, whether her population, her manufactories, her credit; whether the value and the improvement of her land have been diminished or increased by the Union?—let him look to her capital, and let him ask, whether its magnificence, its population, its trade, and its consequence, have been improved or hurt by the Union? Let him ask these questions, and when he has received the answer, which sure I am he will receive; let him then ask himself, what is there in the situation of his own country, what is there in her resources, or in the spirit of her inhabitants, to prevent her from attaining the same blessings which Scotland has procured by the Union?

But then asks, whimsically enough, the Honourable Gentleman, how can you prove that Scotland would not have arrived at all these advantages *without* an Union? Why really, Sir, that is a question very much out of the power of human understanding to answer; but if he will allow me, I will re-

fer the Honourable Gentleman to the only source from whence he is likely to gain any information on the present subject, and that is to the Scotch themselves: and let him ask them, whether they conceive Scotland could have risen to the consequence, or enjoyed the wealth she has, without an Union? But then, rejoins the Honourable Gentleman, equally whimsically, how do you know that Ireland will arrive at those blessings with the assistance of an Union? Now that, Sir, again, is a question as much out of the reach of human ken, as much beyond the powers of human comprehension to understand as the other. But, perhaps, the Honourable Gentleman will allow us to judge by comparison, and to conclude (pretty justly perhaps) that there is no very probable reason why Ireland should be less a favourite of fortune than Scotland has been, particularly too, when it is considered that Scotland had not half the advantages which Ireland possesses, either in situation, or in the assistance which England has held out

to her, and which she did not hold out to Scotland before the Union.

But, Sir, to return. Is it consequence which England is to derive exclusively from Irish Union? Unfortunately, sad experience has taught us, what I wish to God it had equally taught every man, who pretends to be anxious for the welfare of Ireland, that to English dominion, and to English consequence, Ireland owes her protection, her credit, and her existence.

But then, said an Honourable Gentleman, (and astonished was I to hear that language held in an English House of Commons;) the Union England offers is nothing but French Fraternity! Good God, Sir! where does the Honourable Gentleman look for the comparison? Does he look for it in Switzerland? Let him rake amongst the still smoking ashes of that devoted country! — let him probe her bleeding wounds! let him listen to the groans of her inhabitants! to the cries of her violated daughters, of her orphan children, of her

parents, bewailing the offspring they have lost!—and when he has "supped full of these "horrors," let him, if he has the feelings of a man, if he has the spirit of an Englishman, let him say, *there* is the comparison between English Union, and French Fraternity! My God, Sir, what was there in the Constitution of Switzerland that gave France a right to interfere in it—what was the protection which France had extended to Switzerland—what was the commerce which France had secured to Switzerland—what was the aid which France had bestowed upon Switzerland—what claim had France upon the gratitude of Switzerland, to give France a title to interfere?—And did France offer to the *choice* of the people of Switzerland the *blessings* of her Constitution? No! She offered in exchange for the *peaceful* government of Switzerland, for the simple comforts which *contented* the inhabitants of her mountains, for the religion to which she was attached, she offered the enjoyment of anarchy and of confusion! the

comforts of poverty and of wretchedness! the blessings of atheism and of infidelity! she offered them at the point of the bayonet! she enforced them by arguments of rapine, of robbery, and of blood! If the Honourable Gentleman cannot find his comparison *there*, let him look onward to Italy; to her late peaceful scenes! Let him look to Rome, to Venice, to Savoy, to Brabant, to Holland, to Egypt!—the objects of French Fraternity, because the objects of French ambition! let him look (for sorry am I to say that France has given him full scope for his examination), let him look from the Alps to the Pyrennees, from the North Seas to the Nile; and in that vast expanse of country let him place his finger, if he can, on any one spot of ground, and say, *there* is the comparison between the Union which England offers to Ireland, and the Fraternity which France inflicts upon her victims.

Sir, the Honourable Gentleman favoured us the other night with what he conceived

constituted the component principles of a Jacobin! I now will give him my ideas on the subject.—The villifying the Constitution of his country, depreciating her resources, decrying her credit, cramping her exertions, encouraging her discontented, withholding the aid which every man of honour and of principle owes to his country, when in danger, "throwing bitters into the "vessel of her peace," constitute what England has unfortunately seen too much of,—but what she cannot be too much aware of, constitute an *English Jacobin*. I beg pardon, Sir, of the House, for the warmth into which I have been betrayed on this subject. But whilst I have a nerve to feel, or a voice to convey my feelings, I never will shrink from grappling with a position, or a comparison, so odious and so monstrous!

But, Sir, one Honourable Gentleman has used, in my opinion, a very singular argument; he has said, that by an Union the Parliament will be moved out of the country, the disaffected will remain, and the in-

vitation to the enemy will be as strong as ever. Now, Sir, perhaps the Honourable Gentleman will allow me, that the invitation to the enemy proceeds from the discontents of the people; and if he will concede me this point, I will beg leave to ask him what may be the cause *assigned* by the people of their disaffection: he will perhaps remember, that it was a distrust in the ability of Parliament to relieve their distresses, or to redress their grievances. Now, Sir, how the *removal* of that Parliament can produce the effects the Honourable Gentleman dreads, I cannot myself conceive; for either the actual removal of the *presence* of the supposed grievance, must also carry with it the pretended effect of that grievance, or the coalition of that Parliament with the British Houses must give to it an increased vigour and activity, which must entirely take away from the Irish any fears of its ability to redress any grievances it may think worthy its notice. Either way, therefore, I think the change of the locality of

the Irish Parliament must of necessity have the contrary effect to that which the Honourable Gentleman predicts. The Honourable Gentleman follows up his argument with another equally whimsical.—"Not "only" says he "the invitation to the French "will be as strong as ever, but an *additional* "cause of discontent will be given." And what is this *additional* cause of discontent? "Why, the Aristocracy will withdraw "themselves from the country," (which, by the by, in the first place, I deny); "conse- "quently the cottager would feel an addi- "tional cause of discontent." Now, Sir, in allowing the fact, I deny the consequence. The discontent of the Irish cottager arises from this cause, *not* from the *absence* of the Aristocracy, but from the *carelessness* of the Irish Aristocracy, as to what happens to the cottager, from the want of provision made for him, from the want of protection held out to him, when he is in distress. In England, when the poor man, either by sickness of himself, or his family, is disabled from

gaining his bread by his labour, he knows where to turn for help; he knows that by the law the rich man is obliged to preserve him from hunger and from want. The Irish cottager, alas! has no such prospect. When sickness or mischance takes from *him* the means of his subsistence, *he* has no where else to look, *he* has no protection to claim, *he* has no prospect, save that of hunger and want; to the mercy only he is left of that God who feeds the hungry, and comforts the afflicted! The thousands of the lower Irish, who every year, in the harvest months, flock to this country, carry back with them accounts of the state of the English poor, which only make the unfortunate Irishman look back to his own miserable hovel, to *his* forlorn and destitute situation, with increased feelings of anguish and of misery! to an Union only he looks with hope; because by an Union only can he see a chance given him of partaking in the plenty and the comforts which fall to the lot of his English brethren. And I assert the fact (a

fact which it would have been as well if the Honourable Gentlemen had looked to before they talked of the universal detestation in which the idea of an Union is held in Ireland), that the cottager looks with anxious expectation to an Union, which he knows can alone open the door to a participation of those comforts which the English poor receive from the generosity of an *English Parliament*. I have now, Sir, no more to say. I have gone much further into the question than I intended to have done; and I have no apology to make to the House for the time which I have taken up, save the importance of the measure; and, I trust, that will be deemed sufficient. The ground on which I go is most simple. Such is the situation of Ireland; and so little, in my opinion, is the spirit of rebellion crushed within her, that unless some material and some speedy change takes place in her relative situation, Ireland, I fear, will be lost to England. To my astonishment, Sir, I saw it reported in the Irish newspapers, as the

speech of an Irish Member of Parliament, "That the country ought to recollect, that "when America struggled to throw off her "yoke, France assisted her. France, under "her old government, aided America on the "other side of the Atlantic: is not the "present government of France more pow-"erful than the ancient one, and is not Ire-"land nearer than America! England (says "he) is most vulnerable through Ireland." Now, Sir, if this speech was really made, as it is stated, I do not hesitate to say, that a more decided, and a more open invitation to the enemy I never heard. But I am convinced that if the speech was actually made, as reported, it was made with a very different meaning from that which the words so obviously convey. My chief object, however, in mentioning it was, that there is in the conclusion of that speech the strongest argument *to England* in favour of an Union that possibly could have been brought forward, "England is most vulnerable through „Ireland." It is so; and are Englishmen, is

an English Parliament now to hesitate, whether they will adopt the only measure which will take away from Ireland a power she now has, and which her discontented sons have *exercised*, the power of calling upon France to crush the strength of England by invading the shores of Ireland! Let Ireland ponder well on a speech, reported to have been made in her House of Commons, by one whom she then dignified with the name of Patriot, "Ireland (said he) is con-"nected with England, not by allegiance "*only*, but by liberty. The crown is one "great point of Union, but Magna Charta "is a greater: we could get a King any "where, but England is *the only place we* "*can look to for a Constitution.* We are not "united with England, as judge Blackstone "foolishly asserts, by *Conquest*, but by *Char-*"*ter.*"—Such was the language of Mr. Grattan!

In short, Sir, Ireland has now to decide which she prefers, whether an increase of power, or a continuance of rebellion; whe-

ther an accumulation of wretchedness, or an accession of wealth, of credit, and of resources! whether the friendship, the *tried* friendship of England, or the fraternity, the *tried* fraternity of France! whether she will confide her interests and her safety to the diplomatic abilities of Dr. M'Nevin, and Mr. Lewins; to the legal talents of Mr. Emmett; to the constitutional efforts of that *self-avowed traitor*, Mr. Arthur O'Connor (with whose name in this House, I believe, we have been told, the word treason should never be coupled); to the patriotic exertions of any set of men who, with arms in their hands, and with treason in their hearts, talk of *Irish Independance*, and deluge Ireland with Irish blood!—or whether she will accept the proposition which England holds out to her; England! who offers the surest pledge of her sincerity, the participation in the blessings of her own Constitution; in the advantages of her own Government; the Constitution and the Government of a country where domestic

traitors, as well as foreign enemies, *have* shewn themselves, but *have* shewn themselves only to be subdued !

I have now, Sir, nothing more to say, than that conceiving as I do, the measure of an Union most necessary to the existence of Ireland, and most advantageous to the interests of England, I shall certainly give my most earnest and decided Vote, for the Report of the Committee being brought up.

THE END.